

AN IMMOVABLE FOUNDATION NO. 691

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1866,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”
Psalm 11:3.*

WE are walking along through the vineyard of this Psalm, plucking the clusters on the right hand and on the left, when suddenly, with a tremendous roar, the “if” of our text, like a young lion leaps out upon us. What shall we do with it? Let us play the man, like Samson, and rend it as though it were a kid, and doubtless we shall find honey in it, and shall have again to put forth our riddle, “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” These “ifs” are terrible lions, but when grace enables us to slay them, they become good storehouses for sweetness. As the children of Israel spoiled the Egyptians and made themselves rich from the spoils of their oppressors, both when they left Egypt, and after the passage of the Red Sea, so let us gather riches of comfort and arms for future warfare from this “if,” which threatens to enthrall the mind of the Christian and hold him in the chains of fear and doubt.

It comes to us as a keen shaft from the camp of the foe, but by the grace of God we will fit it to our string, and with the arms of faith shoot it back again, and may God in mercy guide it to the joints of some foeman’s harness. This “if” may have a bitter taste at first, but I am persuaded that it will have a wholesome effect upon us to use it, yea, it will yield some spiritual sustenance to our souls. We will welcome its searching and shaking power now, as it will only tend to prepare us for the time when the four winds may come upon our house, and the blast of the terrible one be as a storm against the wall. If we use this giant battering ram “if” now, it will show us our weakness and our strength, so that we may correct the one and rejoice over the other.

We shall take this “if” in two ways, first, we shall consider it as an “if” which is nothing but an “if,” and secondly, we shall consider it as an “if” which is a great deal more than an “if.”

I. We shall first CONSIDER THIS “IF” AS BEING NOTHING BUT AN “IF.”

“If the foundation be removed, what can the righteous do?” My brethren, there are certain spiritual foundations which God has laid in Zion which can never be removed. There are certain foundations against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, which time cannot shake, and which eternity will only confirm. If we venture to speak of these foundations being removed, it can only be in hypothetical terms, and with the word “if,” for there must always be in our souls the conviction that the foundations of God stand sure.

I will mention a few of these foundation-things which we know cannot be removed, but we will ask the question, if they should be removed, what then?

First we will take the *foundation-book*. This Word of God, this revelation of Himself which He has made to us by prophets and by seers, by apostles, and by evangelists, and by His own dear Son—this Book we believe to be true even in its jots and tittles. Whatever form of thought we may adopt as to the method of inspiration, we believe this Book to be inspired throughout, and we accept all its utterances as the teachings of the Most High. From the first word of it to the last we give our “unfeigned assent and consent” to it, as being nothing less and nothing more than the Word of JEHOVAH, the Lord our God, to us. But if it should not be so, what can the righteous do then? If after all, the attacks of modern skeptics should have some force in them, if they can dislodge part of the Word of God from its sure resting place, if first one stone shall topple from the summit of the battlements, and then another shall be

loosened from the parapet, and by and by its enemies should come to work with their great bars upon the very lowest and most valuable stones in the wall—what then? What if the Book should be a delusion, what if it should be false? Ah! then, my brethren, what *can* the righteous do? Oh! better had it been better for us that we had never been born, than that the Bible should not be true, for here is the only balm that heals the wounds that sin has made, here is the only bread that satisfies the hungering of our spirits. If that be not true, O God, why did You create us, and wherefore did You suffer such a Book as that to come across our path to mock us, supplying as it does all that hope can desire, and all that our deepest interests can crave after? Oh, cruel God, to permit so sweet a dream to charm us even for a while, if it be not true!

But oh, beloved, we come back with a sacred recoil to this—it is true, it must be true, and if for no other reason, because it so suits the craving of our inward consciousness, because it so uplifts us out of the natural beggary and meanness of our condition, puts us on such a heavenly footing, makes us commune with the Most High, and fills us with such rapt and heavenly thoughts! It must be true, or else what could we do? Cling, then, to the divine authority of the Scriptures with a death grip! Let those give up the inspiration of the Bible who can afford to do so, but you and I cannot. Let those cast away the sure promise of God who have got something else to comfort them, who can go to their philosophy or turn to their self-conceit. But as for you and for me, it is a desperate matter for us if this Book be not true, and therefore let us be ready to defend it at all hazards, and if need be to die for it, for oh! brethren, it were better to die, that Book being true, than to live, that Book being false. It were better for us that all the miseries of this life should fall upon us, that Book being an unmoved foundation, than for all the joys of life to be ours if that Book be once taken away. Clasp it to your heart, enfold it in your bosom, hold it as the very core of your life's comfort and the very strength of your existence, remember that if that be removed there is nothing for the righteous to do but despair and die. I hope we shall ever sing—

*“Should all the forms which men devise
Assault my soul with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind this Bible to my heart.”*

But now we turn from the foundation-Book to *the foundation-doctrine*. What is the foundation-doctrine? I shall not shock any one of you if I say that it is admitted by all evangelical Christians that the standing or falling in the church is that of justification by faith. The church which holds that doctrine is in the body, the church which is tampering with that doctrine is not in the body. I will not merely say the church that is not holding it, but the church that is not holding it in the most distinct form is not to be acknowledged as a part of the body of Christ, for this is such a truth that it must not be hidden, and to obscure those words, legible in their own light—“Believe and live”—is to commit high treason against the majesty of God, and to make one's self an outlaw from God and from mercy.

The great standing or falling doctrine, then, is this—“Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,” “Therefore we are justified by faith, and not by the works of the law.” We hold that it is of faith that it might be of grace through Christ Jesus. Holding this truth, that every soul who believes in Christ is thereby made a partaker of the merit of His passion and is saved, what joy and peace are opened up to us! Some of us live in a sense of pardon. Oh! Brethren, this is a river to swim in, when we can sing—

*“Now freed from sin I walk at large,
My Savior's blood my full discharge;
At His dear feet my soul I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”*

Oh! the blessedness—as Ainsworth translates it—“The heaped-up blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.” Oh! the blessedness of being justified by faith, and of

possessing peace with God! But if that is removed, what can the righteous do? My brethren, the righteous can do nothing, they can do nothing, and they must at once give up their peace, give up their joy, give up their hopes, and then give up existence altogether. This one thing I know, though I have preached my Master's Gospel with perpetual industry, and have sought to honor Him, yet I have no more hope of heaven apart from the merits of Christ than the greatest criminal that is banished from his country for his crimes, and that poor wretch who was till lately under sentence of death for many murders, would have as good a hope of entering into eternal life as the best among you were it not for this precious doctrine—that is to say, she would have no hope, and you would have no hope either, for we are all alike shut up under condemnation, good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, we are all alike condemned under the law of God, and there would be no more hope for one than for another if this doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ were not true. We are all in this one boat together—I mean as many of us as have believed, the weakest cannot sink unless the ship goes down, and the strongest cannot float unless the ship should bear them.

If this foundation were removed, I will ask you grey-haired saint, hoary with many years of service, what could *you* do? You bow your head and say, “Alas! my master, what could I do but die in despair?” I would ask the bravest of Christ's apostles, the most earnest and indefatigable of the servants of the living God, what could they do if salvation be not the result of faith in Christ, and they would reply unanimously, “We were of all men the most miserable, if our only hope were gone!” But oh, brethren, we will come back to this, that it is by faith in the blood of Jesus that we are saved. For this doctrine let us be prepared to bear any reproach, and for the spread of this doctrine let us make any exertions. Let us publish it to every wind, let us invoke the help of every wave to bear it abroad!

My brethren, help those of us who are engaged in telling out this precious truth of salvation by faith, and then proclaim it far and wide yourselves. Distribute it in a printed form, speak of it with your warm and loving lips! Tell it, tell it the wide world over, that there is a foundation already laid in Zion, a cornerstone elect and precious, and that “other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ the righteous,” and that “whosoever believes in him is not condemned.”

We will now go a step further. We have had the foundation-Book and the foundation-doctrine, and now we come to the *foundation-fact*. The fact upon which our faith rests is this, that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The great fact on which genuine faith rests is this, that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” and that having taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of man, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, for us.

The great truth which makes the Gospel worth proclaiming, is the truth that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” that Christ also has suffered for sin, “the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God,” “Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree,” “For the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.” In one word, the great fact on which the Christian's hope rests is *substitution*. The vicarious sacrifice of Christ for the sinner, Christ suffering for the sinner, Christ's being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, Christ offering up a true and proper expiatory and substitutionary sacrifice in the room, place, and stead of as many as the Father gave Him, who are recognized by their trusting in Him—this is the cardinal fact of the Gospel. Now, if this be true, what will we not do? Do? Why, we will sing of Christ in time, and sing of Him in eternity. We will sit at the foot of His cross and—

***“View the flowing
Of the Savior's precious blood;
With divine assurance knowing
He has made our peace with God.”***

We will praise Him when we get to heaven, and sing, “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood.” But—oh! horrible “but!”—if this be not true, if God was never incarnate, if God

never did in the person of His Son Jesus bleed and die, if no atonement was ever made for human guilt, then howl because thereof! Let each man put his hands upon his loins as a woman in travail, and let sorrow pierce the heart of every child of Adam, for sin must be punished, and if it was never punished in Christ it must be punished upon each one of us. Wrath, and a certain terrible looking for of judgment and fiery indignation—these are all that await us. “As when a man wipes a dish and turns it,” said the prophet, even so will it be with us, wiped out and turned upside down, if it were not true that Christ died. As when the potter with a rod of iron breaks the vessel into shivers, so should we too be broken into shivers, but each particle to be full of pain and covered with grief, if it were not that Jesus died.

Oh! if this foundation were removed, what could we do? But it cannot be removed! We know it, we rest on it, we trust in it, and our joy is to hold it, to understand and to study it, to be actuated and moved by it in every part of our life and conversation, but if it were removed what could the righteous do? There is just now, and there has been for many years, a direct attack made upon the doctrine of the atonement. Men cannot bear substitution. They gnash their teeth at the thought of the Lamb of God bearing the sin of man. Ah! but we will proclaim it in defiance of them, and hurl it in their teeth, we will neither dilute it, nor change it, nor fritter it away in any shape or fashion. It shall still be Christ a positive substitute, bearing human guilt, and suffering in the stead of men, for if this is not so what could we do? We cannot, dare not give it up, for it is our life.

I have thus given you three matters, and now just a word upon another point, namely—*the foundation-work*. The blood of Jesus, brethren, must be applied by the Spirit of divine grace, and the foundation of our inward confidence must be in the work of grace in our own souls. Now, the foundation in us was laid in repentance, and in faith in Christ, and we have gone on to build thereon, much I am afraid, of wood, hay, and stubble, but still, something of gold, and silver, and precious stones.

Now, if the grace of God could cease to work, if the eternal love of JEHOVAH could be removed, and if the effectual might of the Holy Spirit’s arm could be withdrawn, what could you and I do? Would it not be as hard to get to Heaven by the Gospel as by the law if it were not for the work of grace in us? Brethren, Calvary is no nearer to heaven than Sinai, if the Spirit of grace work not in us. If Christ be not crucified in us, His being crucified for us will be of no avail, we must have Christ formed in us the hope of glory.

Now, what say you, brethren? Suppose this foundation-work were all removed, what could you do? Do? Why, the brightest of you would become as smoking flax without light, you who are pure as crystal now in your daily life, would become like a polluted stream, you who now are the delight and joy of the church of God, would be as reprobate silver cast out, or as salt that has lost its savor, and is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill.

We must ever keep in mind that we are only channels for grace, we are not even pools and reservoirs, we must have a continual supply of Divine gifts. We must have an abiding union with the fountain of all good, or we should soon run dry, and only as fresh streams flow into us are we kept from becoming mere dry beds of sand and mire, but we *know* that He will never fail us. This spring is high up in heaven near the eternal throne, and it ripples down through the means of grace from the God of all grace, and we receive daily of His fullness grace for grace. Joyful truth for us, that because He lives we must live also. Till Jesus bows His head in death, we, the living members of His mystic body, can never droop or fail. His might is our strength, His resources our never-failing supply. And we, through His Spirit, are daily tended and sustained—

***“Oh! To grace, how great a debtor,
Daily I’m constrained to be!”***

Were that grace once gone what should I do? Hold fast, then, to that which you have received, that no man take your crown. Cling to the doctrine of the work of the Spirit with a death grip! Never give it up. Having begun in the Spirit, do not seek to be made perfect in the flesh. Do not look to excitement, do

not let your faith stand in the wisdom or the speech of man, but in the power of God, and in the invincible might and majesty of the Holy Ghost, for if you go anywhere else, the foundation will be removed, and then what can you do? O God! You have begun the good work, and You will carry it on, and perfect it unto the day of Christ. This foundation shall not be removed.

Once more, there is also a *foundation-hope*. Something which we may, I think, call a foundation, since our joy and our peace very much depend upon it. You and I possess tonight, dear friends, a hope which is sometimes called “a blessed hope,” and at another time “a good hope.” It is a hope partly that Christ may come, a hope that when He comes, “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” It is a hope that whether He comes in our lifetime or not, yet, if we fall asleep, we shall sleep in Jesus. We have a hope that sometimes bursts out into a song, and then we tune it in warbling such as this—

*“On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan’s fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.”*

Or sometimes it is—

*“Jerusalem! my happy home!
Name ever dear to me;
When shall my labors have an end,
In joy, and peace, and thee?”*

Or, perhaps it is—

*“Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest;
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and soul opprest;
We know not, oh! we know not,
What joys await us there;
What radiance of glory,
What bliss beyond compare.”*

At any rate, whatever notes we may use to warble out the hope, the hope is still the same—

*“It is the hope, the blissful hope,
Which Jesu’s grace has given;
The hope when days and years are past,
We all shall meet in heaven.”*

Now, if that were removed, what could we do?—

*“What is there here that I should wait?
My hope’s alone in Thee;
When will Thou open glory’s gate,
And take me up to Thee?”*

“Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides you.” Take heaven away and the world to come, and what a desert drear, what blackness and darkness, what a gulf of mad despair it would speedily become! But, oh! brethren, that foundation cannot be removed! Because He lives, we shall live also. “Father, I will that they also whom you have given me, be with me

where I am, that they may behold my glory.” That hope abides sure and steadfast, let us think of it more than we do. Let us plume our wings of flight every now and then. Come, you birds of heaven, you eaglets of God, how is it that you keep below upon the earth, as though you had no wings? Come, plume your callow pinions and begin to fly. The clouds are your atmosphere, beyond there is the blue empyrean, where all is fair and clear. Up with you! Up, nearer to God, nearer to eternity, nearer to your home, nearer to your everlasting mansion. Remember that you—

*“Nightly pitch your moving tent
A day’s march nearer home,”*

and let the thought that you shall soon be—

“Forever with the Lord”

come over your hearts, and sweep like the touch of some master harpist’s hand as he sweeps the ten-stringed instrument, and wakes it up to thunders of sacred melody. Be glad in the Lord, you righteous, and shout for joy, you upright in heart, for this foundation cannot be removed, and you need not fear.

II. And now we change our note for a few minutes. Let us TAKE THIS “IF” AS BEING SOMETHING MORE THAN AN “IF.”

The foundations may be removed, not the spiritual foundations at all, but the temporal foundations. The foundations of civil government, the foundations of commerce, the foundations of one’s estates, the foundations of trust between man and man, these may be removed, they have been grievously and terribly shaken during the last few days. War may arise. There seem to be many indications of a coming tempest, and when the eagles are gathered together to the prey, the fight will probably thicken, and instead of a few combatants, it may be that there will be a multitude of nations engaged in a terrible slaughter, and the foundations of the various kingdoms of Europe may be removed.

Revolution too may come. We remember 1848, and some of you, perhaps, are old enough to go farther back than that, to dates when revolutions were the order of the day. There are some who are always putting on their blue spectacles, and who can see very wonderful revolutions here. May their heads never ache before their predictions come to pass, but still these things may occur, for men are men, and if they should, what then? If the foundations should be removed, what would the righteous do? A panic has come, and man does not trust his fellow man, but plays the fool, the wild lunatic in the street, destroying commerce for the sake of commerce, and to get gain himself destroying the tree that bears the fruit.

I suppose no greater proof of folly could have been known in the nineteenth century than might have been seen last Friday in Lombard Street. If anyone had whistled for a thousand fools, he need not have traveled a thousand yards, but might have found them on the spot. Now, if there should be such a thing, there may be ground for all this fear, for the foundations of human things are not made by God, they are only man’s management, and consequently they may be shaken, but what then? I am going to suppose the very worst, that the social fabric is rocking like the walls of old Jericho, and that the very foundations are falling, I will even suppose that the corner-stone is being removed. What then? What can the righteous do?

Well, he can do as well as another man, and he can do a great deal better. Let me tell you what he can do. The first thing he can do, if the worst comes to the worst is, that *he can bear it with a holy equanimity*. He can say, “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” If the ship be wrecked his treasure is not aboard it. He knows that if the banks should break he will only part with some of his odd spending-money but his true treasure is up there, not in an iron chest, where the burglar can break through, but—

“Hid with Christ in God

Beyond the reach of harm;

so that if the worst comes, he can still fold his arms and say, "It is written, 'I will never leave and never forsake you,' and so long as I have bread to eat and raiment to put on, so long will I bless the name of the Lord Most High from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same."

Now, dear friends, do you prove this if it should happen to you. Do not do as the worldling does who puts his hand to his fevered brow and says, "I am a ruined man!" you cannot be a ruined man. Do not say, "I have lost my all," you cannot lose your all, your all is Christ, and Christ is not to be lost. Just accept the blow, kiss the rod, touch the hand that smites, and say, "Blessed be you my Father, for it is the Lord."

Then the Christian not only bears the worst patiently, but the next thing he can do is *to hope for the best cheerfully*. I think if there is any man who can see clearest, even a spot of blue sky it should be the Christian. "Oh!" says he, "things are not what they seem, the dark cloud has a silver lining, light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." It is very much in the struggle of life to keep a brave heart, and you, Christian, have many arguments for so doing.

Wherefore bow your head at yonder crested billow, as though you should be drowned by it? O man, it will only wash your face, it is all that it will do for you, and you shall lift your brow when the spray has cleared it towards heaven, and shall see your God the better because the dirt is washed out of your eyes. Therefore, look cheerfully for something bright in the midst of the darkness. Out of all this apparent loss, God can bring for you true gain in spiritual things. You may part with things temporal with equanimity, if they are likely to be restored to you transmuted by God's alchemy into things spiritual and eternal.

If God takes away from His people, He can restore again, as in the case of Job, twice as much as they had before, in worldly goods even, and with these a gracious work of His Spirit in the heart, which is more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold. Adam was laid asleep, and God took a rib, and made it into a helpmeet for him. If God shall take anything from you, yea, though it lies near your heart, do not mourn as one that has no hope, in patience possess your soul, rest on the Lord, for He will bring it to pass that out of all this shall come a spiritual life-power which in after days shall gladden your heart, and make you the joyful parent of much good to others in this world of sin and woe. Christ became poor that He might make many rich, and in His poverty He was as a lamb before its shearers dumb, and opened not His mouth. His prayer was, "not my will, O Father, but yours be done," so may we hold our peace, if God has done it, never charge God foolishly, but say, "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

If the foundations are removed what can the righteous do? Why, they can do one thing, *they can do the right*. They cannot guarantee results, but they can do the right. They cannot tell whether they shall fail in business or not, but they can be upright. They cannot tell whether the fall of this house or the crash of that bank may injure them, but they can tell that they will have clean hands, and come out of it all with a spotless character, and when everything is lost there is but little lost if honor still remains, and if integrity is still preserved by divine grace. He that wears the herb hearts-ease in his bosom is richer than he who can wear diamonds upon his fingers, if those fingers be stained with guilt. It is comparatively easy to be correct and upright when these things pay, when we can by them secure the esteem of our fellow men, and that confidence which is as good as money to a man in business, because of the credit it brings with it. But it is quite another thing to do the right when it means to strip oneself of all, and to give up long-loved and cherished possessions, hopes, and prospects, both for ourselves and family.

This is the hour of temptation, when Satan comes with his glory and wealth in one hand and a suggestion of evil in the other, and bids us open our lap to receive them, reminding us that to deny him is to close with injury and loss to reputation, to our business, and to our loved families at home. How many have made the dread compact with the Prince of Darkness! They have gained the world but lost

their soul. They have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, and bartered heaven for hell, time has been taken and eternity rejected. The honor of men has been esteemed more than the praise of God, they have grasped the gold and it has been a millstone round their neck, and into the deepest depths of woe it has dragged them, lost! lost! lost forever! Oh, that men were wise, that they would remember this, that they would consider their latter end, for what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Come what may, trust in God and do the right.

There is another thing we can do if the foundations be removed, namely, *if we have a hand to spare we will help a comrade up*. If the foundations be removed and there is a common calamity, when others are selfish the Christian will hear his Savior's words, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." "Well," says he, "it is a time of general suffering, and when a boat is at sea with a few survivors from a wreck, no man hoards his biscuit, no man keeps that little drop of pure fresh water wholly to himself, but like a generous man he divides his biscuit with his fellow sufferers, and drinks his drop with the rest." So will the righteous do. When things are bad they will say, "Now is the time for me to exhibit some degree of generosity."

I like the action of a man who was once waited upon for a subscription, and contrary to expectation, gave the minister who asked him a very large check—I think it was one hundred pounds. The minister was about to retire when the merchant happening to open one of his letters found that he had lost a vessel worth from ten thousand to twenty thousand pounds. He called the minister and said, "You must give me back that check, I have just opened a letter and found that I have been a very great loser." The poor country minister whose chapel was in a very bad plight, looked very blank about the matter, but the merchant said, "I find my money is going fast, I suppose I have not made good use of it, and so the Master has taken it away, but I will save some of it anyhow." And he wrote out another check for five pounds.

Now, this was a right way of acting—provided of course the money was his own—for no man has a right to give away other people's property, but if it were his own this was the true and wise pathway to choose to make some of it safe, a much better plan than when my lord comes fresh from his bank with his money in his hand, and says, "Go and do likewise, my brave fellows, get your money out like this!" and then finds five minutes afterwards that somebody else has his money without giving him a receipt for the deposit, or anything of the kind, for it has gone into the hands of a pickpocket, who is not so much to be blamed, perhaps, in such cases as he might have been in some others. Now, I can recommend to you when things are going bad, to make good investments. "Give a portion to seven and also to eight, for you know not what evil may be upon the earth." "Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of righteousness, that when you fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Once again. There is something more which the righteous man can do, if the foundations are removed, and that is, *he can trust in God that it will be well in the end*. The worldling says, "It will be all the same a hundred years from now." The Christian says, "I do not want to look so far ahead as that, it is all right now." But the wind blows! "It is all right." But the waves dash! "It is all right." But all the sails are reefed! "It is all right!" But the ship flies before the wind! "It is all right." But there are rocks ahead! "It is all right." Why? "Because He who is at the helm knows all about it, He created both wind and wave, and He knows how to cope with the storm. I cannot see that it is right, but I know that it is, and I walk by faith, and not by sight."

Oh! Christian, this is what you can do. If the foundations be removed, you can bring faith into heavenly exercise, and you can sail against the wind. The night may be dark and dreary but it will usher in the brighter morn, and merrily will the celestial music and songs greet his ears as the fresh dawning light triumphs over the fleeing darkness, and spreads itself till it bathes with its splendor all things which were even in the darkness working together for the good of God's people. Yes, the rough March winds and the dreary April showers were all fulfilling their task then, and now we can see it and rejoice in it as well as in their result. We will sing in our dungeon with Paul and Silas, for all is well *now* as it will be

hereafter in heaven. It is only in degree and realization that earth's joys differ from heaven's to the true believer in Christ.

Lastly, if the foundations be removed, *the righteous can commune with Christ therein*. We should never have such fellowship with Jesus as we do if we had not such troubles as we have. You cannot see the stars in the daytime, but they tell us that if you go down into a well you can. Sometimes God sinks wells of trouble and puts His servants into them, and then they see His starry promises. You might hunt in vain for glowworms by day, but they shall all be seen at night, and so shall the comfortable words and thoughts of Holy Scripture. The fireflies shall flash best at night when the sunlight is gone, and so oftentimes the light of the promises is best seen in the night of trouble than in the day of outward prosperity. The black foils of trouble shall bring out the brighter jewel of divine grace.

You cannot know Christ except by following in His footsteps. Poverty will reveal Him who for our sakes became poor, sickness will show Him whose visage was more marred than any man's, shame will teach you His shame, and suffering will reveal to you His suffering, and even death itself, which shall remove the foundations, shall give you conformity to His death that you may have part in His resurrection. Courage then, my dear brethren, and to the question, "If the foundations be removed, what can the righteous do?" give this answer, "We can do as the righteous ought to do, we can do as God enables us to do." Let us go and show the world what that will be, and let the superiority of our faith and of our religion reveal itself in our times of darkness and in our hours of suffering.

I have been thinking all the while I have been thus talking that this text has an application to those who are not righteous, because if the righteous cannot do anything if the grace of God fail, then what can the wicked do? They can do nothing, but then they can do as much as the righteous, who can do nothing either, and so here is comfort for the very worst, and for those who feel themselves to be farthest from God. As long as the foundation stands there is hope for every soul that believes, and though you be the worst of the worst, yet if you trust Christ there is hope for you, though there would not be any if the foundations were removed, even if you were the best of the best. Come, then, needy sinner, come, though years of sin have heaped up their iniquities upon you. Come to Jesus, He can cleanse you. Trust Him, trust Him, trust Him now, and you are saved, and shall be His in the day of His appearing. Build on this foundation. Christ Jesus died for the ungodly. Trust Him to save you, and when the floods arise, and the rain descends, and the winds blow, your house shall never fall, because it is built upon a rock, a foundation that can never be removed.

I would that some here tonight would learn to leave the treacherous path of sin, and seek an interest in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know that the road you tread is undermined, and that sooner or later you will fall through, and sink on, on, on through the grave into the pit which has no bottom, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. Turn you, turn you, for why will you die? There is a sure foundation which cannot move, on which you may build and never fear an overthrow. Come, then, with all your load of guilt, and rest at once and forever on Him who says, "Come unto me, and him that comes I will in nowise cast out." Heaven and earth may pass, but He will save to the uttermost all who come by faith to Him.

God bless these remarks to you according to His will, for Jesus' sake. Amen.—

*"Yes! He is mine! and nought of earthly things,
Not all the charms of pleasure, wealth, or power,
The fame of heroes, or the pomp of kings,
Could tempt me to forego His love an hour:
'Go, worthless world,' I cry, 'with all that's thine;
Go, I my Savior's am, and He is mine.'*

*Whate'er may change, in Him no change is seen,
A glorious sun that wanes not, nor declines;
Above the clouds and storms He walks unseen,*

*And sweetly on His people's darkness shines:
All may depart—I fret not, nor repine,
While I my Savior's am, and He is mine.*

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PART OF ISAIAH 40.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.